Special status to Rajasthan

†2509. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of peculiarities such as two-third desert area, drought and long inter national border with Pakistan etc. characterizing Rajasthan, Government propose to confer special status on the State like the one given to Nbrth-East Slates, J and K, Assam, Manipur and Himachal Pradesh; and

(b) if so, steps taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, reasons therefore?

. THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Special Category States status has been accorded to some States on the basis of a set criteria that includes— having a strategic location on the border with neighbouring countries, hilly terrain, inadequate economic and social infrastructure, predominantly large tribal population and limited and weak resource base compared to development needs. Most States that have been granted Special Category status during the last two decades have been created out of small Union Territories or from districts of some other States necessitating creation of overheads and administrative infrastructure out of proportion to their resource base.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal at present before the Government for including Rajasthan in the list of Special Category States.

New survey on BPL status

2510. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD. Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the BPL Survey Report done in 2002 was shelved on a Supreme Court stay order and if so, whether a new survey on BPL status in the country is proposed to be done in 2007;

(b) whether the earlier surveys on poverty estimation done by Planning Commission and the Ministry of Rural Development independently of each other, were irreconcilable on a number of parameters; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi